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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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SUBJECT: "FORTNIGHTLY FOOD-SHOPPING TIPS." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Consumers' Counsel, U.S.D.A.

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Once again here's news of food supplies and prices--tips for the housewife who plans the meals and does the family marketing.

Nobody in the United States ought to go hungry this year--no person and no animal. Folks with big appetites may well raise a cheer. For supplies of food are big. The U.S. Department of Agriculture sends out this statement: "Production of all crops for food and feed will probably be the second largest on record." The statement continues: "Production of most foods on a per capita basis also is expected to be above average."

That's the general picture of food in this country for the coming months. Now for some glimpses of special foods. First, about fruit. Unusually large supplies of citrus fruit will be coming in during the winter and spring. The grapefruit crop promises to be the second largest on record. And the orange crop is likely to make a record.

You remember a bad freeze caught many grapefruit on the trees last winter. This year about 22 percent more grapefruit will be going to market. About half this year's crop will come from Florida; a third from Texas; and the rest from California and Arizona. Early in October the first shipments of grapefruit from Texas and Florida went to market. More and more will be coming in during the winter and spring months.

As for oranges, about 15 percent more oranges will be going to market this year. Probably you won't notice so many more oranges until after the first of the



year. You remember the freeze caught the oranges in January 1940. After January the markets had fewer oranges. This year California and Florida will divide the honors on oranges. These 2 States will account for about 90 percent of the oranges on the market, half coming from California and half from Florida. The Florida season is a little late this year. The first oranges from Florida didn't come in until October. You will see many more coming on the market during November and December.

Another fresh fruit coming on the market this season is the cranberry. You remember last year the cranberry crop was large, and the markets had lots of these bright red berries for sale. This year the crop is not so large. But even so, the markets will have more cranberries this fall than in any of 3 of the past 5 years. By the way, how do you choose your cranberries? A good many housewives mistakenly choose by color. They think bright red berries must be better than dark red. But color indicates variety, just as in dark red and bright red apples. The way to pick good cranberries is to choose those that look fresh and plump, have a high luster, and feel firm.

So much for news of fruit on the market. Now about vegetables. The price of tender vegetables like fresh tomatoes and string beans goes up this time of year. After Jack Frost gets in his first licks the northern States no longer send tender vegetables to the market and the South and Far West take over. Prices go up because supplies are smaller and vegetables must travel longer distances to the big markets. Probably supplies of the early tender vegetables from the South and Far West will be larger this fall than last if the weather continues favorable.

As for the hardy vegetables from the late-producing regions--potatoes and sweetpotatoes, cabbages and onions -- their harvesting is pretty well along now. Crops of potatoes and cabbage are larger this year, but crops of onions and sweetpotatoes are smaller. Right along now is the time to get best prices on these 4



vegetables. When the harvest is at its peak you can expect prices to be lowest.

So much for news of vegetables. Now for a note about nuts. In the last few years many nut crops have been unusually large. This fall the pecan crop is larger than last year's but other crops are smaller. Even so the total supply of nuts this year will be larger than the average supply. You can expect to see more pecans selling, not quite so many walnuts and filberts, and many less almonds.

And here's news of beef on the market. The United States will have about as many better-grade beef cattle this fall and winter as last year. But in recent weeks not so many better-grade beef cattle have been going to market. So prices of better-grade live cattle at Chicago have gone up again and reached high points for the year. Prices of better-grade dressed beef also have gone up slightly but not nearly so far as they went in September. Perhaps you've noticed the big difference between the price of top-quality beef and average-quality beef. The difference is almost twice as large as it was a year ago.

So much for beef news. Now let's wind up with the new list of surplus foods to give you an idea where to look for food bargains in your grocery store. Here's the official list as it came out on October 15: Irish potatoes; apples; pears; oranges; dried prunes; raisins; dried beans; butter; eggs; pork products including lard; corn meal; hominy grits; rice; wheat flour and whole wheat or Graham flour.

And that's all the food-shopping tips for today. More in a fortnight.



